

The effective U.S. filing date for this application is that of the U.S. National Phase of the International Application No. PCT/GB96/02463 filed on October 9, 1996. Foreign priority to GB95/21106.6 is also claimed, which means that the application has a foreign priority date of October 16, 1995. The effective filing date of Wood on July 18, 2001 is well after the effective filing date of the instant application. Accordingly, the double-patenting rejections based on Wood should be withdrawn.

Claims 26-31 stand rejected for obviousness-type double patenting in view of claim 8 of U.S. Patent 6,696,110 to Tuffin in view of Tsuboyama and Wenz. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Tuffin's effective filing date is March 29, 2000, which is many years after the effective filing date of the instant application. Accordingly, the Tuffin patent is not prior art. Withdrawal of the rejection based on Tuffin is respectfully requested.

Claims 26-31 stand provisionally rejection provisionally rejected for obviousness-type double patenting based on claim 18 of U.S. Patent Application No. 10/538,788 in view of Tsuboyama and Wenz. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The '788 application to Francis et al. corresponds to U.S. Patent Publication No. 2006/0054858 A1, which has an effective filing date of November 11, 2003. Thus, the 102(e) date of Francis's application is well after the filing date of the instant application. Withdrawal of the rejections based upon the Francis application are respectfully requested.

Since all of the outstanding rejections are based in references which are not prior art to the instant application, all claims should now be allowed.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's allowance of claims 32-37. With respect to the Examiner's reasons for allowance, Applicants agree that the combination of features recited in

BRYAN-BROWN et al.
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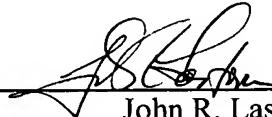
each of these claims is patentable. To the extent that the Examiner's reasons for allowance are inconsistent with or add additional limitations to the claims, Applicants respectfully disagree because the claims define the invention.

The application is in condition for allowance. An early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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